



SPECIAL BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, July 7, 2020

BOARD MEMBERS:

Georgia Hanigan, Commissioner, Payette County (not present)
Nate Marvin, Commissioner, Washington County (in attendance virtually – pending BOCC confirmation)
Tom Dale, Commissioner, Canyon County (in attendance virtually – pending BOCC confirmation)
Kelly Aberasturi, Commissioner, Owyhee County (present – pending BOCC confirmation)
Viki Purdy, Commissioner, Adams County – present
Sam Summers, MD, Physician Representative – (present – pending reappointment)
Bryan Elliott, Commissioner, Gem County - present

STAFF MEMBERS:

Nikki Zogg, Jaime Aanensen, Doug Doney, Katrina Williams, Troy Cunningham, Clay Roscoe, Ashley Anderson, Ricky Bowman

GUESTS: Approximately 45 guests attending via Zoom including media partners and members of the public

BOARD MEMBER TERM RENEWALS

Nikki Zogg explained that Board member term renewals are in process. As a result, today's meeting will be informational with a COVID-19 update and discussion. There will be no action items or decisions made today. Board member term renewals are expected early next week from each Board of County Commissioners and should another special Board meeting be required board member renewal processes should be complete.

COVID-19 UPDATE AND DISCUSSION

The group heard from Ricky Bowman, SWDH Public Health Preparedness and Response Program Manager regarding trends among cases including many linking back to large social gatherings and events. Ricky discussed efforts to increase the efficiency of case investigations including designating an epidemiology representative to monitor each county's trends and report back. Ricky also mentioned that hospitalizations for COVID-19 illness have numbered approximately 20 in the last week.

Ricky explained that cases are taking 30-60 minutes of staff time for case monitoring. He also explained that some individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 have taken responsibility to initiate notifying their close contacts.

The group also heard information about testing capacity. Dr. Roscoe advised that testing capacity and public testing is well below what needs to happen. He distinguished between the types of testing. Swab testing – a nasal or oral swab – has higher sensitivity and usually a test within the first week produces the most highly effective testing rate. Antibody/serology testing cannot be used for diagnosing cases but can show if someone has developed those antibodies.

Nikki explained that updated hospitalization data are available on the state website. She has visited with executives at three local hospitals and they each are managing their personal protective equipment (PPE) and capacity well. They shared challenges with staffing shortages due to illness. The other concern raised is the demand for testing which is difficult to meet. St. Luke's and Saint Alphonsus have been offering symptomatic and asymptomatic and have now scaled that back to testing only symptomatic people.

Nikki shared and discussed the draft State of Idaho Stay Open Plan. This document was developed at the state level with input from the local health districts.

Nikki also explained a SWDH objective to identify a long-term data analyst to help with data we will be expected to monitor and have available as the responsibility for managing the pandemic is shifting from the state to local level. Elected officials have needs for information for decision making and our communities have a need for information to help them be informed about the risk of COVID-19 exposure where they live, work, and play.

Nikki explained that the district cannot stop the disease and mitigate all disease and risk. This is a new disease that will not be eradicated at this point. Helping people be informed of the level of risk for exposure in their communities and what personal and community measures can be taken to reduce the risk are important. Board members discussed the fact that the level of risk varies within every area and people accept risk in their life very differently.

Nikki presented the draft SWDH COVID-19 Health Alert Level tool developed with feedback from the Board of Health and county emergency managers to help define the difference between community risk and personal risk. The risk level language has been simplified to high, medium, low, and routine. The health alert level system is intended to be a communications tool. Nikki shared an example of utilizing this communication tool at the Demolition Derby in Owyhee County. Physical distancing at the event would be difficult to maintain and there was concern about risk for exposure. Health Alert level signage was used to communicate the increased risk for exposure at the event with recommendations on how to limit personal risk for exposure. Owyhee County officials wished to help inform and advise, and shared the appropriate risk card.

Nikki shared that SWDH has received a lot of questions from event holders about how many people they can safely be put in a space whether indoor or outdoor. To address these questions, Nikki has been working with fire department staff to develop a method for calculating the approximate capacity for events where risk of exposure to COVID-19 may exist. Utilizing the same method fire fighters use to determine safe capacity for a physical space, SWDH adopted estimated the approximate capacity necessary to ensure a minimum of 6 feet of physical distance could be maintained between people not in the same household.

The health alert levels are determined with a mix of quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data includes emergency room utilization by individuals with COVID-19 like illness, number of persons under monitoring who have been exposed to COVID-19 but not yet developed symptoms as well as other data points. The qualitative side is really important and that includes communications from our healthcare partners, local elected officials who are in communication with their constituents, and epidemiologists employed by SWDH.

Alert levels would be reassessed every two weeks and each level has a data point and a threshold, which will be used in determining the appropriate alert level for the city or county.

Board members discussed concerns about shutting down private businesses. Some businesses have opted for cleaning or self-closing when staff are sick and SWDH has provided guidance to support them in those decisions.

Board members provided feedback to the Southwest District Health Director indicating mandatory face coverings or business closures would not be public health strategies the Board of Health would consider under the current situation.

At the meeting on July 7, 2020, Board of Health members encouraged preventive measures, common sense, and personal responsibility. Board of Health members also acknowledged there are many

susceptible or vulnerable folks who know how to take care of and protect themselves as well as many residents who will make the effort to protect those around them without being required to do so.

Board members discussed working collaboratively with local cities and counties if roll backs to previous stages may be needed to slow the spread of disease to a level that can be managed by our available resources.

Board members also acknowledge the need to continue to monitor the numbers going forward to understand active cases. A special board meeting may be held next week to consider further information or make further decisions if needed.

No further input or questions from BOH members. Meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Approved as written:



Nikole Zogg
Secretary to the Board



Bryan Elliott
Chairman

Dated: July 28, 2020